Letters to the Editor

Nothing More Sad

April 12 begins Wild Life Week in Canada. May I, as a nature lover and a great lover of Victoria, appeal through the medium of your paper to fellow citizens of Victoria to take notice of this?

Every week should be wild life week in Victoria, and especially so during the spring, when the wild flowers of this area are at their best.

Victoria is always being acclaimed as a beautiful city (which, of course, it is) and a tourist attraction and so on, and yet the very thing that makes it beautiful is fast being destroyed by thoughtless people.

At this time the wild white lilies, or erythroniums, and other wild flowers make the countryside around Victoria the delightful place it is.

Could parents please train their children that it is to everyone's benefit if the wild flowers are left to grow and multiply? The conservationists do not want to have to make laws to protect every wild flower of this province, or even of this delightful island, but if the rate of wanton picking that goes on at present is not stopped, then something drastic may have to be done, or within a few years Victoria will lose its most valuable attraction.

I understand that a good deal is already done in schools by teachers to try to train children to protect the wild flowers, and this is certainly commendable.

Nothing is more sad looking than a tight handful of wild white lilies all bunched together. Nothing more beautiful than just two or three of them separately. And the most beautiful sight of all is to see them growing in thick masses where they are left to grow year after year in their own native habitat. Why not leave them where they belong so that others can see them and enjoy them too?

The Thetis Park Nature Sanctuary Association (supported by the Victoria Natural History Society and other worthwhile groups) is looking after the first nature sanctuary of its kind in this province, and possibly in Canada, and every possible effort is being made to protect the native plants in this area. May I issue this plea to everyone: We want you to enjoy the beauties of nature, but will you please take care of them, and do not destroy them?

EMILY SARTAIN.
Director, Thetis Park Nature Sanctuary Ass'n.

Poorer Every Year

I wonder if it ever occurs to those policemen and firemen, employees of the city, who go on superannuation within the next few years, that when they retire the annual increases granted to their fellow workers will mean their superannuation or income goes down each time, as it declines in purchasing power. They will then realize, I think, what we who are striving for stability are getting at. A consumer on superannuation or pension gets poorer every year as wages and salaries rise and the pension shrinks in purchasing power.

Maybe it would be a good thing for those about to retire to give serious thought, in council with their association, to this idea.

M. P. PAINE.
3620 Quadra Street.

In Only 40 Years

Population to Triple

By THOMAS R. HENRY
North American Newspaper Alliance

During the next 40 years the world's population will nearly triple—from a present 2,500,000,000 to 7,000,000,000.

This estimate, just issued by the U.S. population reference bureau in Washington, assumes that the present death rate remains stable. Even during the last two years there has been an increase of 90,000,000—equal to the entire population of Japan.

* * *

During the next 600 years—the report cites a United Nations commission estimate—the population will have reached a point where there will be only a square yard of space on the earth's surface, including polar regions and deserts. This, of course, assumes the present rate of increase continues.

The bureau's estimates go only through this century. "If fertility remains at its present levels," says the report, "world population will reach the 3,000,000,000 mark by 1962, 4,000,000,000 in 1977, 5,000,000,000 about 1990 and 6,000,000,000 before 2000. That is only as far in the future as 1918 is in the past.

* * *

"Should fertility miraculously begin to decline at once on a global scale, world population will be around 5,000,000,000 by the end of the century.

"These projections assume that mortality will continue to decline in the economically underdeveloped areas of the world, where population increases of 3 per cent a year are common. The population of the world is growing at the rate of 1.7 per cent a year.

The 7,000,000,000 estimate is based on an assumption that there will be no decline in birth rate and no devastating, world-wide series of wars and epidemics. On the other hand, it is stressed, the decline in death rates will continue to decrease everywhere.

The present sharp drop in death rates, says the report, "has set off the jet-propelled surge in population since the Second World War."

Perhaps, it is stressed, a decline is already setting in. For example, there has been a decline in the marriage rate in the United States. Japan has cut its birth rate from 34 to 17 per thousand since 1947.

All this offers some hope that the direful prediction of a world without standing room for its population will not actually materialize.

PREMIER KASSEM
. . . quick, ruthless

* * *

Iraq Idol Unknown

By TOM MASTERSON
(Associated Press)

Iraq's Premier Abdel Karim Kassem is still something of a mystery man, even to his own people.

When Kassem swept out of the desert last July, overthrew the monarchy and set up the republic, few Iraqis had heard his name.

Nine months later, they still know little about him. Poems and songs are composed about him. Pictures are plastered everywhere. He seems the most popular leader to rise up in Iraq's recent history.

* * *

To a large extent, this stems from hard-working publicity agents. But of his personal life, almost nothing is ever said.

He shows himself only occasionally to the Baghdad street crowds, and seeming embarrassed, gives only a slight wave of his hand.

This is the man who is challenging Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, up to now a principal idol of all Arabs.

* * *

Kassem has stood unflinching before Nasser's attacks against him personally and his regime. Nasser obviously aims to end Kassem's power. To do this, his United Arab Republic's propaganda machine is grinding out almost hourly one of the most massive and concerted campaigns ever seen in the Middle East.

But Kassem depends on a newly purged army for his support, and the Iraqi Communists who back him seem to have control of the street mobs in Baghdad.

* * *

Kassem is a workhorse. He has developed a habit of working until the early hours of the morning, saving the daylight hours for conferences and meeting people.

He gives the impression he is a simple soldier, trying to do what's right for his country. He speaks softly. The words sound as if they're coming from the most reasonable of men.

Perhaps this is so. But those who know him intimately say he is an intensely complicated man. He has the instincts, patience and single-mindedness of the hunter. When he strikes, he is quick and ruthless.

* * *

The Communists make it known in all their demands that they're not sure of him. If and when they try to tackle Kassem, this might prove to be the ruler's first real test of strength.

Robot Brain Joins Army

A field radiation and prediction apparatus has been developed for the U.S. Army for use in the event of nuclear war.

Each so-called "radiological control centre" will be provided with a mechanical brain which will predict fallout to be expected from enemy weapons. It also will evaluate and disseminate radiological data for its area based on readings taken by both ground and air monitors.

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Technology Causes Paradox

Fewer Jobs as Production Soars

By JOHN I. SNYDER JR.
President, U.S. Industries, Inc.

The No. 1 economic problem today, around which all other problems resolve, is unemployment. And, despite the fact that mills and factories are operating at high levels, with high records for production being set in nearly every field, the uncertainty of joblessness is going to be with us as long ahead as can be seen.

Government economists still cling to the belief that unemployment is certain to decline. U.S. Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell predicts unemployment will drop sharply by October. Raymond Saulnier, chairman of President Eisenhower's council of economic advisers, supports Mitchell. Largely, they base their forecasts on an ever-increasing growth in national productivity.

* * *

I do not agree with them. I think their forecasts are more political than realistic. I think productivity and production will increase but without substantial additions to the total labor force required.

Certainly, of course, industry is rebounding from last year's forced recession. Production records are being equalled or broken in steel, food, aluminum, construction and many other fields. But this pickup in output isn't reflected in employment figures. I don't think it is going to be, either.

* * *

Let's look at steel, as a good example. This industry's mills are producing more steel than ever before in history. Yet right now—in this time of unprecedented boom — there are more than 100,000 unemployed in the U.S. steel industry. And, I. W. Abel, secretary-treasurer of the United Steelworkers of America, warns that these idle steelworkers will never go back to work in the mills, even if the industry stays at its current top capacity, or even exceeds today's record production.

They — like many of the growing total of unemployed —are caught in the tightening vise of automation and modern equipment.

Industry's drive today—as, indeed, it must be for survival —is toward improving and increasing efficiency and capacity of productive equipment. There is less and less reliance upon skilled and semi-skilled workers.

* * *

All of this modernization, of course, in both plants and machines, contributes to higher unemployment. Take, for example, an automatically-programmed resistance-welding machine, introduced recently. With this machine, one manufacturer of taipipe liners for jet engines reports his production time has been reduced by 81 per cent, his man-hours of labor per unit cut to one-and-one-third man hours from 16 per unit. This is not an exception. It is typical.

Labor itself is only too well aware of what is happening. The fear of fewer and fewer jobs ahead supports the recent AFL-CIO executive council decision to push for a shorter work week — down from today's 40-hour level to a 35-hour week and a seven-hour day.

* * *

The unions themselves are not entirely blameless in this serious unemployment picture, particularly where workers are in the so-called "older" group—40 years of age, and beyond. Under labor-demand pension plans, many firms will not now employ those over 40, because they have to pay higher—and often prohibitive —rates for coverage. As a result, labor itself, through its insistence on security at any cost, contributed to a degree toward the cause of today's unemployment.

Many economists and industrialists argue that today's disquietingly high level of unemployment can be—and will be—lowered as the output of goods and services expands in response to growing demands.

* * *

In the long run, I feel that neither a shorter work week nor a faster rate of national economic growth is going to go very far toward lowering the current high unemployment figures or higher unemployment figures as annual additions are made to the total work force.

Most of those now registered as jobless are going to remain unemployed — and unemployable. In fact, their numbers will grow. Technology and the increasing size of industrial units make this inevitable.

Such increasing unemployment is, naturally, of the greatest gravity.

But we must face up to it.

It's going to take some radically new thinking—some basic switches in fundamental aims and a lot of give-and-take on the part of government, labor and industry—to meet it head-on and lick it.

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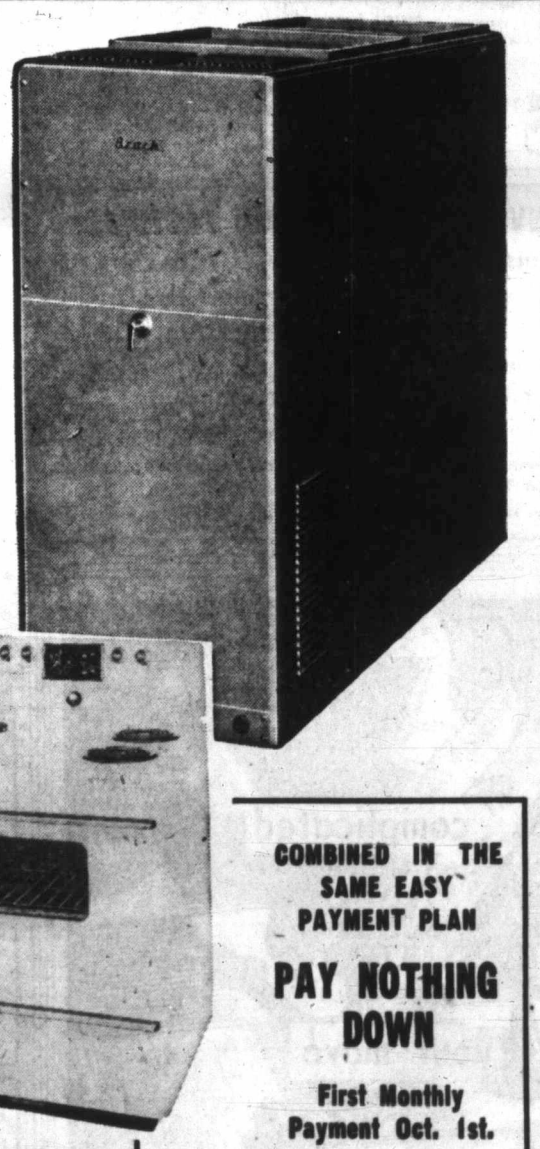

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